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B U R R . C O M

March 17, 2020

VIA EMAIL (nedwards@ors.sc.gov) and via U.S. Postal Service

Nanette S. Edwards, Esq.
 Executive Director
 Office of Regulatory Staff
 1401 Main Street, Ste. 850
 Columbia, SC 29201

Re: South Carolina Telephone Coalition Actions as to COVID-19

Dear Ms. Edwards:

We are writing to apprise you of the efforts rural telephone companies throughout the State (known as the "South Carolina Telephone Coalition") are taking to address the needs of South Carolina, and particularly the State's students, during this time of school closings due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

First, each of the South Carolina Telephone Coalition member companies is taking specific actions to effectuate FCC Chairman Pai's Pledge to Keep Americans Connected during the coronavirus outbreak. The Keep Americans Connected Pledge reads as follows:

"Given the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on American society, each of the South Carolina Telephone Coalition member companies pledges for the next 60 days to:

- (1) not terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic;
- (2) waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and
- (3) open its Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them."

In addition, the South Carolina Telephone Coalition member companies have committed to providing discounted services to qualifying households with school-age children. The

Nanette S. Edwards, Esq.
March 17, 2020
Page 2

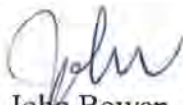
companies also will work with their respective local school districts to assist with any additional needs they may be able to address, including developing additional Wi-Fi hotspots where needed and feasible. Each individual company has issued a press release detailing its efforts to address the needs of its own local community. We have attached those press releases to this letter.

We have also attached a list of the companies and their contact information to help facilitate communication and coordination of efforts.

We hope that you will find this information helpful. The rural telephone companies have been committed for many decades to serving their communities, and will continue that commitment during these trying times.

Very truly yours,

Burr & Forman LLP


M. John Bowen, Jr.
Attorney for the South Carolina
Telephone Coalition

MJB/khh

Attachment

**South Carolina Telephone Coalition
Companies and Contact Information**
March 17, 2020

Chesnee Telephone Company

General Contact: Edward Hinson
Tel: (336) 876-6302
Email: edward.hinson@skyline.org
Service Inquiries: (864) 461-2211

Comporium

General Contact: Matthew Dosch
Tel: (803) 326-7287
Email: matt.dosch@comporium.com
Customer Service: (888) 403-2667; www.comporium.com
Customer Service (Comporium Midlands): (800) 258-7978

Farmers Telephone Cooperative (FTC)

General Contact: Chip Chase
Tel: (803) 968-6098
Email: chasec@ftc.org
Customer Service: (888) 218-5050; www.ftc.net

Hargray Communications

General Contact: Karen Cline, Digital Marketing & PR Manager
Tel: (843) 341-1567
Email: Karen.Cline@htc.hargray.com
Service Inquiries: (877) 427-4729; www.hargray.com

Home Telecom

Questions/General Contact: Gina Shuler

Tel: (843) 761-9178

Email: gina.shuler@hometelco.com

Customer Service: (888) 746-4482; www.HomeSC.com/Contact-Us

Horry Telephone Cooperative

Questions/General Contact: Sarah Bonnoitt

Tel: (843) 369-8634

Email: Sarah.bonnoitt@htcinc.net

Service Inquiries: (843) 365-2154

Palmetto Rural Telephone Cooperative

General Contact: Dewey Ford, Marketing Manager

Tel: (843) 538-9090

Customer Service (Walterboro): (843) 538-2020

Customer Service (St. George): (843) 931-1212

Piedmont Rural Telephone Cooperative (PRTC)

General Contact: Sharon O'Bryant

Tel: (864) 683-3708

Email: sharono@prtcom.com

Service Contact: Tracy Babb

Tel: (864) 683-3751

Email: tracyb@prtcom.com

Sandhill Telephone Cooperative

General Contact: C. Lee Chambers, CEO

Tel: (843) 658-6379

Email: lee.chambers@mysandhill.net

TDS

General Contact: Mike Wanta, Brand Journalist

Tel: (608) 664-1096

Email: mike.wanta@tdstelecom.com

Customer Service: (888) 287-8156

TruVista

General Contact: Jeff Lambert

Tel: (803) 581-9159

Email: jeff.lambert@truvista.biz

Sales/Service: (800) 768-1212

West Carolina Rural Telephone Cooperative

General Contact: Virginia Smith

Tel: (864) 446-9254

Email: virginia.smith@wctel.com

Service Contact: Shannon Sears

Tel: (864) 446-9267

Email: shannon.sears@wctel.com



For immediate release.

Contact: Edward Hinson

SkyLine/SkyBest

Phone: 336-876-6302

Email: edward.hinson@skyline.org

**Chesnee Communications Providing 60 Days of Free Internet Service to Students
*Offering Internet to New Customers in Homes with K-12 and Higher Education Students***

March 17, 2020

With the continuing spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster made the difficult decision to close all public schools for two weeks. Knowing that our students and their parents will need greater access to broadband, Chesnee Communications is offering 60 days of free service to new customers in homes where a student lives. We want to make sure that as the need to be connected to the world increases, Chesnee Communications is doing its part to make that easier.

Chesnee Communications is offering 60 days of free Standard Broadband service and free installation to any home that is:

- The primary home of a student in kindergarten through high school, in technical school, in college or in graduate school;
- Currently without our internet service and that hasn't had internet service with Chesnee Communications for the past 90 days; and
- Located where Chesnee Communications would normally provide internet service.

We are also waiving installation fees during this time. Chesnee Communications plans to keep this opportunity available to new customers through the end of March and will re-evaluate it at that time.

Chesnee Communications is also committed to working with customers impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19) to prevent their internet service from being disconnected during this challenging period. For more than 80 years, we have always made a point to work with our customers in difficult situations to try to keep them connected. We will continue to do that throughout the coronavirus outbreak. We know that during difficult times like this, a connection to work, school and current events in the world is more important than ever.

Additionally, Chesnee Communications has already reached out to each County School District to assist them as they prepare to meet their students' needs remotely. As school districts in our area prepare to

send their students and teachers home, we will assist them in any way we can to make their jobs easier. Shortly after the governors announced the closing of public schools across the Carolinas, our team began contacting our local school districts' superintendents to discuss ways that we could help devise a solution with regard to connectivity.

Our network is designed and ready for events like this. Chesnee Communications has recently made upgrades to both our core network and our field equipment. Even during this trying time, our broadband network is more than capable of handling a dramatic increase in the number of people working and learning from home. Chesnee Communications technicians are also monitoring the network continuously to ensure that they detect and address any problems as soon as possible.

Finally, as we stated on March 13, Chesnee Communications has taken steps to ensure our employees' and our customers' safety. Those measures include work and travel policy changes, increased education on illness prevention methods and more stringent practices for disinfecting vehicles and tools between customer visits. We want to ensure that our technicians can continue to serve our community safely, quickly and with the same level of professionalism our customers have come to expect.

To find out more, please contact us at 864-461-2211.

Chesnee Communications is a subsidiary of SkyBest Communications.

As the state's largest telecommunications cooperative, SkyLine and its subsidiary, SkyBest Communications, provides advanced communications services and technology solutions across an expanding network in northwest N.C., east/middle Tennessee and upstate South Carolina. With more than 65 years of service to the High Country, Chesnee Communications is the local team you can count on for Gig-capable Broadband, Business Communications and Network Solutions, Bundled Services (Voice/Internet/Digital TV), Business Phone Systems, Business Hosting Solutions, Monitored Security Services and Automation and Surveillance Services.



Contact: Matthew Dosch
Comporium
Phone: 803-326-7287
matt.dosch@comporium.com

Comporium Providing 60 Days of Free Internet Service to Students
Offering Internet to New Customers in Homes with K-12 and Higher Education Students

ROCK HILL, S.C. – March 16, 2020 – With the continuing spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), South Carolina Governor, Henry McMaster and North Carolina Governor, Roy Cooper, made the difficult decision to close all public schools through the end of March. Knowing that our students and their parents will need greater access to broadband, Comporium is offering 60 days of free service to new customers in homes where a student lives. We want to make sure that as the need to be connected to the world increases, Comporium is doing its part to make that easier.

Comporium is offering 60 days of free Standard HSI service and free installation to any home that is:

- The primary home of a student in kindergarten through high school, in technical school, in college, or in graduate school;
- Currently without our internet service and that hasn't had internet service with Comporium for the past 90 days; and
- Located where Comporium would normally provide internet service.

We are also waiving installation fees and our normal security deposit process during this time. Comporium plans to keep this opportunity available to new customers through the end of March and will reevaluate it at that time.

Comporium is also committed to working with customers impacted by coronavirus (COVID-19) to prevent their internet service from being disconnected during this challenging situation. For 125 years, we have always made a point to work with our customers in difficult situations to try to keep them connected. We will continue to do that throughout the coronavirus outbreak. We know that during difficult times like this, a connection to work, school, and current events in the world is more important than ever.

Additionally, Comporium has already been working with the Lancaster County School District to assist them as they prepared to meet their students' needs remotely. As more school districts in our area prepare to send their students and teachers home, we will assist them in any way we can to make their jobs easier. Shortly after the governors announced the closing of public schools across the Carolinas, our team began contacting our local school districts' superintendents to discuss ways that we could help ease their burden.

Our network is designed and ready for events like this. Comporium has recently made upgrades to both our core network and our field equipment. Even during this trying time, our broadband network is more than capable of handling the additional strain of many people working and learning from home. Comporium's technicians are also monitoring the network continuously to ensure that they detect and address any problems as soon as possible.

Finally, as we stated on March 12, Comporium has taken steps to ensure our employees' and our customers' safety. Those measures include work and travel policy changes, increased education on illness prevention methods, and more stringent practices for disinfecting vehicles and tools between customer visits. We want to make sure that our technicians can continue to serve our community safely, quickly, and with the same level of professionalism our customers have come to expect.

To find out more, please contact us at 1-888-403-2667 or chat with a member of our customer service team at www.comporium.com. Customers living in Comporium's Midlands service area should call 1-800-258-7978.

About Comporium

Comporium, Inc., headquartered in Rock Hill, S.C., is a diversified, privately-held communications company that employs nearly 1,100 people and provides broadband, TV, voice, wireless, smart home systems and advertising services throughout the Carolinas. Comporium's ventures include companies providing business solutions, data storage and managed services, smart devices and connected home services, and digital signage. For more information, please visit www.comporium.com.

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For Immediate Release: 3/17/2020



Contact: Chip Chase
FTC
Phone: 803-968-6098
chasec@ftc.org

FTC to roll out 60 days of free Internet to students
Service will be offered to new customers in homes with K-12 and college students

Schools across South Carolina have closed during this time of uncertainty due to the continuing spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19). During the closure, many schools will rely on online learning opportunities. With its schools and students in mind, FTC is offering 60 days of free internet service and free installation to any home within FTC's service area that meets the following criteria:

- The primary home of a student in kindergarten through high school, technical school, college or in graduate school;
- New customer that has not been an internet customer with FTC for the past 90 days;
- Primary home located in FTC's service area.

FTC is making it easier to utilize the program by taking orders over the phone at 888-218-5050 and waiving the normal security deposit process. The service does not have data caps or hidden fees. FTC plans to make the internet offer available to new customers through March 31 and the program will be re-evaluated at that time.

FTC is committed to helping customers impacted by the coronavirus (COVID-19) by also not suspending their services due to non-payment. The Cooperative understands its services are vital to staying connected to work, school, loved ones, and to receiving updates related to the virus. Those who are unable to pay their bill due to economic conditions related to the coronavirus are asked to call 888-218-5050 to discuss their situation and set up a payment plan if necessary.

Also, FTC would like to remind its customers of the multiple options available to get information from its Customer Service Department, to report a repair request or to pay bills without having to enter one of its seven stores:

Reach a Customer Service Representative Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

- By calling 888-218-5050 and pressing “4” when prompted;
- Visiting its website, ftc.net, and beginning a chat session by clicking on the bottom right of the screen;
- Texting 843-FTC-TEXT (843-382-8398);
- Emailing contact@ftc.net;

Report a repair request 24 hours a day, seven days a week

- By calling 611 from any FTC phone or by calling 888-218-5050 and pressing “3” when prompted;
- Those who pay their account online may report a repair request through the FTC website at ftc.net.

Bill pay options 24 hours a day, seven days a week

- By calling 888-218-5050 and pressing “1” when prompted;
- Accessing their account online at ftc.net;
- Using payment drop depositories available at each FTC store with the exception of the Johnsonville location.

ABOUT FTC

Founded in 1951, Farmers Telephone Cooperative, Inc. is a local, multifaceted telecommunications company headquartered in Kingstree, S.C. Serving more than 60,000 customers within a coverage area of 3,000 square miles, FTC provides cutting-edge technology to businesses and residents of Clarendon, lower Florence, Lee, Sumter and Williamsburg counties.

A veteran of the telephone industry, FTC has evolved into a state-of-the-art organization, offering internet, wireless, voice, security and digital TV. Customers can choose from a wide array of products and services at any of the company’s seven full-service stores.

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For more information, contact:
Karen Cline, Digital Marketing & PR Manager
Hargray Communications
843-341-1567 (o)
Karen.Cline@htc.hargray.com

HARGRAY LAUNCHES SPECIAL PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT REMOTE LEARNING FOR GRADES K-12 AND COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE SOUTHEAST AND JOINS FCC IN PLEDGE TO “KEEP AMERICANS CONNECTED”

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, SC - March 16, 2020 - As the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic increasingly impacts families and businesses across the Southeast, Hargray is partnering with educators, including Beaufort County Schools, to ensure students have the necessary Internet connectivity to continue their studies during school closings. Hargray announced today programs to support remote learning for students in grades K-12 and college. To ease the strain in this challenging time, effective immediately:

- Hargray will offer free Internet service for 60 days to households in its service area with K-12 or college students who do not already have a Hargray Internet subscription. To learn more about this program, and to enroll, please visit www.hargray.com/freeinternet
- Hargray will also offer discounted Internet speed upgrades to existing customers to ensure they have the necessary bandwidth to accommodate higher Internet usage in their homes during this time. Current customers interested in increasing their Internet speeds should please call 877-427-4729.
- Hargray will also offer discounted packages to new customers without K-12 or college students. To learn more about these offers, please call 877-427-4729.

Hargray is also proud to announce it has joined the “Keep Americans Connected” pledge launched by the Federal Communications Commission and in doing so has committed to waive late fees and not terminate service to residential or small business customers that are unable to pay their bills due to economic circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19).

Finally, Hargray is taking steps to keep its colleagues and customers safe and healthy. In addition to avoiding non-essential travel and encouraging colleagues to work from home, Hargray is placing hand sanitizers throughout the company’s offices, retail stores and vehicles, ensuring that janitorial services conform to the EPA’s guidelines for use against coronavirus, and is continuing to assess and appropriately adjust its supply chain to ensure business continuity. Along these lines, the company is providing colleagues tools to work remotely and is taking measures to help protect colleagues and customers as colleagues continue to install and maintain customers’ communications services.

About Hargray

Founded in 1947, Hargray is a regional telecommunications company providing advanced communications and entertainment services in a growing set of markets in the southeastern United States. Hargray delivers advanced fiber-optic technology and service to residential and business customers and is active in the communities it serves by supporting a wide range of local charities, organizations, projects, and events. For more information, please visit www.hargray.com

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Home Telecom Offers Special Internet Programs to Support Remote Students and Workers during Coronavirus Pandemic *Joins FCC in "Keep America Connected" Pledge*

MONCKS CORNER, SC March 17, 2020 – In their commitment to keep all Home Telecom customers connected at all times throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, Home Telecom will suspend disconnections for any residential or small business customer due to nonpayment of services for the next 60 days. Home Telecom will also waive any late fees incurred as a result of late payments caused by pandemic disruptions.

Additionally, as part of the FCC Keep America Connected pledge, Home Telecom hotspots have always been open and free to the public and will remain open and free to anyone in the Lowcountry who needs to access them.

Home Telecom will also be offering several Internet programs to support remote workers and e-learning for students.

- Free Internet with WiFi will be available to NEW households in our service area with K-12 or college students during the national emergency. Visit [HomeSC.com/Connect](https://www.hometelco.com/connect) for more information and to sign-up.
- Current Internet customers can upgrade their Internet speed to the next speed tier without a price increase for three months to assist homes requiring more bandwidth during this time. Current customers can visit [HomeSC.com/Speed-Upgrade](https://www.hometelco.com/speed-upgrade) to request the discounted Internet speed upgrade.
- As always, there are NO overage fees or usage caps associated with Home Telecom Internet plans.

According to William S. Helmly, President and CEO, "Our customers in the Lowcountry can rest assured knowing the Home Telecom resilient network is more than capable of handling the needs of people remotely working, as well as for students completing their coursework from home." Helmly continues, "Home Telecom is fully committed to keeping the communities we serve connected during this national emergency and long after."

For the safety of Home Telecom technicians, if a site visit is required, you will be asked to answer a list of screening questions prior to a technician being able to enter your home. Home Telecom urges our patrons to be honest and keep the welfare of our employees and those they come in contact with in mind.

For more information, contact Caoimhe Zett at Home Telecom, caoimhe.zett@hometelco.com or (843) 761-9859.

HTC
Tom Vitt
Director of Public Relations
Tom.Vitt@htcinc.net
843-369-8559



HTC Responds to COVID-19 with Pledge to Keep Members, Community Connected

[CONWAY, SOUTH CAROLINA, March 17, 2020] – HTC, like many in our area, has been monitoring the arrival and spread of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) over the past few weeks. HTC recognizes that families will rely more than ever on our services and we are working with local schools and businesses to determine the best means to assist with their broadband and communications needs.

HTC is proud to announce it has signed the FCC's "Keeping Americans Connected Pledge," which means that for the next 60 days, your local cooperative pledges to:

- (1) not terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic;
- (2) waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic;
- and
- (3) open its Wi-Fi hotspots to any American who needs them.

HTC is committed to keeping our community members connected in this time of need. We will continue to take steps to ensure the health and safety of our employees, members and neighbors.

About HTC

Founded in 1952, HTC celebrates over 65 years of service to Horry and Georgetown Counties as a local communications leader. HTC offers High Speed Internet, Digital Cable, Digital Wireless, Home Security, local telephone and long distance service, and advanced business services such as Local and Wide Area Networks (LAN/WAN), Managed Networks, VOIP Solutions, WiFi Solutions, Firewall and Security services. HTC provides these services utilizing the area's most extensive fiber optic network.



Dear PRTC Customer,

On behalf of PRTC, I am reaching out to assure you that the safety and well-being of our customers and our employees remain our highest priority, along with the responsibility to keep you connected.

The safety of our customers and employees is always our top priority. We have implemented the following practices:

Precautions we've taken to help keep our employees healthy:

- Currently, we have no confirmed cases of COVID-19 among our workforce.
- We have canceled all domestic business travel.
- We are practicing social distancing. All meetings with outside vendors and business partners or that involve large groups have been canceled or are now conducted remotely as conference calls or video conferences.
- We have distributed hundreds of bottles of hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to our employees and have begun regularly disinfecting and deep cleaning our offices.
- Before any employee will be dispatched to a customer's home for a service call, we will ask the customer a series of questions to determine the risk of exposure to our employee. If any risk exists, the service call will be rescheduled if possible. If the service call is an emergency, special precautions must be taken by our employee and our customers before a visit can be made.
- Internal communications have been created to keep our employees updated on the latest news of the virus, keep them informed on how to prevent the spread of the illness and answer their questions.
- We have shared specific instructions with our employees on the importance of washing their hands and staying home if they feel sick.

As an additional step to ensure the safety of our customers and employees, we ask our customers not to come in our retail location if they feel ill. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but it is for the safety of everyone.

In preparation for the schools closing, PRTC will provide a free Wi-Fi hotspot in downtown Walterboro. This hotspot will enable students that do not otherwise have access to a



broadband connection to complete schoolwork in an outdoor environment or from the safety of their family vehicles.

In order to support e-learning for students while they are home during this state of emergency, we have implemented the following promotion:

- Customers that have a student (K-12 or College) in the home and do not have internet service, PRTC will provide FREE installation and FREE sixty or ninety days of service, depending on the customers' long-term needs.
- PRTC will offer a FREE ninety-day internet upgrade for existing customers that have a student (K-12 or College) in the home or work-from-home and need to upgrade their broadband service.

Also, I want to remind our customers of the various methods we have in place to interact with us online and over the phone. All customers have access to their accounts through the customer portal at <https://epay.prtc.us/ebpp/login>, where you can review your account information and make online payments. You can also reach our Customer Service team at 843-538-2020-Walterboro or 843-931-1212-St George; we are always happy to assist. Additionally, you can contact our 24/7 Technical Support line at 866-330-4630 to help resolve technical issues you may be experiencing. For questions regarding this message please contact Dewey Ford, Marketing Manager, at 843-538-9090.

Thank you for remaining a loyal customer. We will keep you updated through email and social media of any changes during this fluid situation and look forward to continuing to meet your connectivity needs.

Sincerely,

Jason J. Dandridge
CEO

Connecting You

Internet | Voice | TV | Security | Wireless

Contact Us

(843) 538-2020 - Walterboro



Business Solutions

(843) 931-1212 – St. George
prtc.us





Piedmont Rural Telephone Cooperative

201 Anderson Dr

Laurens, SC 29360

Press Release

March 17, 2020

Dear PRTC Customer,

On behalf of the entire PRTC team, I am reaching out to assure you that the safety and well-being of our customers and our employees remain our highest priority, along with the responsibility to keep you connected.

The safety of our customers and employees is always our top priority. We have implemented the following practices:

Precautions we've taken to help keep our employees healthy:

- Currently, we have no confirmed cases of COVID-19 among our workforce.
- We have canceled all domestic business travel.
- We are practicing social distancing. All meetings with outside vendors and business partners or that involve large groups have been canceled or are now conducted remotely as conference calls or video conferences.
- We have distributed bottles of hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes and have begun regularly disinfecting and deep cleaning our offices.
- Internal communications have been created to keep our employees updated on the latest news of the virus, keep them informed on how to prevent the spread of the illness and answer their questions.
- We have shared specific instructions with our employees on the importance of washing their hands and staying home if they feel sick.

As an additional step to ensure the safety of our customers and employees, we will be temporarily closing our lobby to walk-in traffic. We apologize for any inconvenience that this may cause, but for the safety of everyone, we felt it was necessary.

We have been in contact with the Schools in our service area to see how PRTC can assist in any way.

In order to support e-learning for students while they are home during this State of emergency, we have implemented the following promotion:

- Customers that have a student (K-12 or College) in the home and do not have internet service, PRTC will provide FREE installation and FREE first month of service credit.

Also, I want to remind our customers of the various methods we have in place to interact with us online and over the phone. All customers have access to their accounts through the Smarthub customer portal at <http://prtcnet.com> where you can review and manage your account and make online payments. Another payment option is our Secure Pay-by-Phone service that can be reached at 864-682-3131. You can also reach our Customer Service or Technical Support Team at 864-682-3131; we are always happy to assist.

Thank you for remaining a loyal customer. We will keep you updated through email and social media of any changes during this fluid situation and look forward to continuing to meet your communication needs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randall Lis", followed by a small flourish.

Randall Lis
General Manager

3-16-20 – For Immediate Release

COVID-19 Press Release

Sandhill takes steps to protect against COVID-19

At Sandhill, we value the health and safety of our customers above all else, which is why we are closely monitoring events concerning COVID-19 (coronavirus). COVID-19 has changed the way we live for the next several weeks. As a service provider invested in our communities, we are committed to helping our members get through these uncertain times. In lieu of the recent school closures, Sandhill has created a plan to assist those affected.

- Sandhill will not suspend any services this month or charge late fees for nonpayment.
- Sandhill will offer a \$25 bill credit for broadband services for any existing customers that we serve that has a child in school (K-12 & College). Go to <https://shhc.net/closed-school-form> to apply for the credit.
- Any customer that does not currently have broadband but needs to add, will receive a one-time \$25 bill credit when installed between now and April 30th.
- The \$1.00 convenience fee for making payments by phone is being waived. This will help any customer that does not wish to come in person to pay their bill.

In addition, Sandhill is taking the following steps, in accordance with CDC guidelines, to protect both our employees and our customers.

- Sandhill employees who feel sick are being instructed to stay home.
- We are directing employees to cancel any work-related flights and to reschedule any work trips.
- Employees who work directly with customers should avoid shaking hands or making any physical contact.
- We will be providing additional disinfectant products to employees in the office and posting additional reminders for employees to wash their hands often.
- All employees are asked to take proper precautions to ensure the safety of themselves and those around them.

As of now all our offices are open. We would like to encourage anyone experiencing flu-like symptoms or fever to contact our office by phone, Cooperative Members visit shhc.net, Sandhill ConNEXTions customers visit shnext.com or access the Smarthub app to manage their services instead of visiting in person. As a reminder, you can access [our](#) websites, our Smarthub app or Tech Support 24/7.

We will continue to monitor this situation closely and explore further measures to support our members and the community as needed. Follow us on social media for updates and visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov for more information about COVID-19.



TDS Announces Free Broadband Access for New K-12, College Student Households and More For 60 Days

Internet access will be provided to new customers in qualifying programs

MADISON, Wis. (March 16, 2020)—TDS Telecommunications LLC (TDS®), announces plans for supporting residential customers during the COVID-19 pandemic. TDS will be offering broadband access to low-income individuals and/or families with children and college students for 60 days. This offer is for new customers in communities where TDS provides service.

"As a company, our first priority is the health and well-being of our employees, customers and the communities we serve," says Drew Petersen, senior vice president of Corporate Affairs at TDS. "During this difficult time, we want to ensure those who cannot afford broadband services have the essential access they need."

To verify eligibility for this offer, residents will be asked to provide documentation from qualifying programs. For more information, please call 1-888-287-8156.

In addition, TDS signed the "Keep America Connected" pledge initiated by Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Ajit Pai last week. TDS is adopting all three tenets of the policy related to voice and broadband customers to a) forego charging late payment penalties for customers impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, to b) suspend disconnects for customers due to the disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic who fail to pay their bills, and to c) open Wi-Fi hot spots where we maintain them for 60 days.

"We are proud to be associated with this important communications service continuity program and commend the FCC for their proactive attention to public safety during this most difficult time," says Petersen.

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For more information contact: Mike Wanta | Brand Journalist | TDS Telecom | 608-664-1096 | mike.wanta@tdstelecom.com

TDS Telecommunications LLC (TDS Telecom/TDS®) delivers high-speed internet, TV entertainment, and phone services to nearly 900 rural, suburban, and metropolitan communities across the U.S. With more than 1.2 million connections, TDS is one of the fastest growing technology companies in the United States. Powered by fiber-optics and new industry-leading technologies, TDS delivers up to 1 Gigabit internet speeds and offers internet-protocol based TV entertainment solutions along with traditional phone services. TDS also offers businesses VoIP advanced communications solutions, dedicated internet service, data networking, and hosted-managed services. Visit tdstelecom.com.

TDS Telecom, headquartered in Madison, Wis., employs nearly 2,700 people and is a subsidiary of Telephone and Data Systems, Inc. [NYSE: TDS], a Fortune 1000® company.

Founded in 1969, TDS Inc. employs 9,400 people and has approximately six million connections nationwide through its businesses U.S. Cellular, TDS Telecom, OneNeck IT Solutions LLC, and TDS Broadband Service. TDS Inc. has been named to several Forbes lists, including America's Best Employers for Diversity, Best Large Employers, and Best Employers for Women. Visit tdsinc.com.



For Immediate Release: 3/17/2020

TruVista To Provide 60 Days of Free Internet Service to Students

Offering Internet to New Customers in Homes with K-12 and Higher Education Students

As our communities are affected by the spread of the COVID-19 virus, we recognize that our company plays an important role in helping customers stay connected to their loved ones, workplaces and schools through the Internet. With the announcements of school closings, we realize that many students may need access to the internet to promote ongoing learning during this challenging time. Beginning March 17, TruVista is committed to offer:

- Free 60 days of our basic internet service including free installation to households with K-12 and/or college students who do not already have a TruVista broadband subscription. This offer is being made to households within our service areas where facilities currently exist.
- We are also waiving our normal deposit and service agreement process for these households during this time. TruVista plans to keep this opportunity available to new customers for 60 days and will reevaluate it at that time.

As the country works to contain this pandemic, internet access will be increasingly important to ensuring that people in our communities are able to learn and work remotely and that our neighbors stay connected with family and friends.

To find out more, please contact us at 800-768-1212 for general information, sales and service.

TruVista Headquartered in Chester, SC, TruVista is a leading provider of communications services to Chester, Fairfield, Kershaw and parts of Richland Counties in South Carolina, and Franklin, Hart, Rabun and Stephens counties in Georgia. We offer a wide variety of products and services to residential and business customers including: voice, internet, video television, security, long distance, and wireless services. Since 1897, we have been the first and foremost to serve the unique needs of our customers. Our heritage is based on providing the highest quality products and superior service to our customers through knowledgeable and dedicated local professionals. At TruVista, we are committed to being involved locally and providing connections that build relationships throughout our markets. We believe our success is best measured by the progress of the communities we serve.

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For Immediate Release

Contact: Virginia Smith, Marketing Representative, (864) 446-9254, virginia.smith@wctel.com

WCTEL/WCFIBER LAUNCHES SPECIAL PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT REMOTE LEARNING FOR GRADES K-12 AND COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE SOUTHEAST AND JOINS FCC IN PLEDGE TO “KEEP AMERICANS CONNECTED”

ABBEVILLE, SC | March 17, 2020 – As the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic increasingly impacts families and businesses across the Southeast, WCTEL is partnering with educators, including McCormick, Abbeville, Greenwood, Anderson and Newberry County Schools, to ensure students have the necessary Internet connectivity to continue their studies during school closings. WCTEL announced today special programs to support remote learning for students in grades K-12 and college.

To ease the strain in this challenging time, effective immediately:

- WCTEL will offer free Internet service for 60 days to households in its service area with K-12 or college students who do not already have a WCTEL Internet subscription.
- WCTEL will also offer free Internet speed upgrades for 60 days to existing customers to ensure they have the necessary bandwidth to accommodate higher Internet usage in their homes during this time.
- WCTEL has identified locations to provide free WiFi hotspots. These hotspots will enable students that do not otherwise have access to a broadband connection to complete schoolwork in an outdoor environment or from the safety of their family vehicles. For a complete list of sites, please visit <https://www.wctel.com/wifi-hotspots/>.
- To learn more about these programs, please visit: <https://www.wctel.com/covid-19/> or call us at (864) 446-2111.

The Keep Americans Connected Pledge launched by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Given the Coronavirus pandemic and its impact on American society, WCTEL pledges for the next 60 days to:

- (1) not terminate service to any residential or small business customers because of their inability to pay their bills due to disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic;
- (2) waive any late fees that any residential or small business customers incur because of their economic circumstances related to the coronavirus pandemic; and

(3) open up FREE public Wi-Fi hotspots.

About WCTEL

The West Carolina Tel family of companies, including WCTEL and WCFIBER, combine a tradition of service with the best technology available. Friendly, community-minded employees are committed to building a fiber network that is ready for whatever the future of technology may hold. The fiber optic network provides wireline and wireless voice, data, video, security, and hosted business services in a four-county area in South Carolina and to neighboring Greenwood, SC, Newberry, SC, and Columbia County, GA. To find out more about West Carolina Tel, visit www.wctel.com. West Carolina Tel is designated as a nationally Certified Gig-Capable Provider¹ by NTCA—The Rural Broadband Association. Funds provided by unclaimed Capital Credits as enabled by South Carolina legislation.

¹ <http://www.ntca.org/awards-recognition-programs/gig-certification.html>